

WASHINGTON DC - Today, Rep Michael Honda (CA-15) issued the following statement: "Issues of equity and fairness are integral to the strength of our democracy. Pay equity, and its affect on every person in the U.S., is a vital issue and it is unconscionable that in the 21st century, the vast majority of women are still not paid fairly for their work. I look forward to the day when every person, regardless of their gender, race or ethnicity, is receiving equal pay for equal work.

According to the Census, women are paid, on average, 77 cents per one dollar earned by a man. Racial and ethnic disparities exacerbate this difference with African American women making 66 cents, Latinas making 55 cents and Asian American women making 80 cents. A recent study by the American Association of University Women reveals that the income gap between men and women widens dramatically following graduation from college, growing from a 20% difference immediately following graduation to a 31% difference ten years later. This gap persisted despite controls for numbers of hours worked, parenthood, and occupation choice.

I am a proud co-sponsor of H.R. 1338, the Paycheck Fairness Act which will improve the remedies available to victims of wage discrimination based on sex. Passage of this legislation will be one of many societal changes we have seen over the past one hundred years of women's struggle for equality in America, but there remains much to be done. The current income gap continues to stand in the way of true equality and as a nation we must work to close the gap faster than the current, abysmally slow, 1.5 cents per year. There are rays of sunshine to be seen on the horizon, but we cannot consider this particular battle won. I look forward to continuing the struggle for equality with my colleagues in Congress during the 110th Congress."